ISEAL Member Requirements

Version 8 – October 2015

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Introduction

This document outlines the eligibility and compliance requirements for ISEAL membership that apply to standard-setting and accreditation bodies. For more information about ISEAL members’ commitment to our Codes of Good Practice, you may wish to consult the ISEAL Code Compliance Requirements for Standard-Setting Members or ISEAL Compliance Requirements for Accreditation Members. For details on how to make an application for membership, please see the relevant ISEAL membership application procedure for standard-setting organisations or accreditation bodies.

ISEAL membership

ISEAL membership is open to all multi-stakeholder sustainability standards and international accreditation bodies that meet the eligibility and other membership requirements, as outlined in this document.

There are two categories of ISEAL membership: associate members and full members. Associate members are sustainability standards that are on a pathway to becoming full members of ISEAL. Any organisation seeking full membership should first apply for associate membership. Following a successful review and membership approval, new associate members

Figure 1. Progression of ISEAL Membership
have one year in which to comply with requirements for full membership, as outlined in the ISEAL Code Compliance Requirements for Standard-Setting Members or ISEAL Compliance Requirements for Accreditation Members. As such it is recommended that only organisations that have reached a certain level of development apply for associate membership.

ISEAL also has a non-member, subscriber category to engage with standards systems not yet ready to apply for ISEAL membership but that wish to be part of the ISEAL Community. The subscriber category is also open to governments, researchers, consultants, companies, non-profit organisations and other stakeholders with a demonstrable commitment to the ISEAL objectives. Subscribers can also access technical training support offered by ISEAL. More information is available on the ISEAL website: www.iseal.org/subscriber

Figure 2. ISEAL Community; distinction between ISEAL Members and Subscribers

Eligibility Requirements

ISEAL membership is open to all multi-stakeholder sustainability standards applied at local and/or international level and international accreditation bodies.

In order to be eligible for ISEAL membership applicants must:

1) Be registered as a legal entity;
2) Have, or accredit to, at least one operational practice and/or performance-based standard that:
   a. Was set using a multi-stakeholder approach;
   b. Focuses on social and/or environmental issues;
   c. Applies at the international, regional, national or sub-national level;
   d. Is voluntary\(^1\) in nature; and
   e. Takes into account the ecological, cultural, and economic realities of the parts of the world in which it operates;
3) Have a governance structure that safeguards impartiality and, for standard-setting activities, enables meaningful participation of directly affected stakeholder groups;

\(^1\) And therefore is not a mandatory requirement for market access
4) Have a standards system that has commitment from key civil society stakeholders;
5) Have an operational assurance system. This means at least one entity has already been assessed using the defined assurance requirements and procedures, or the applicant can demonstrate that at least one entity will have been assessed using the defined assurance requirements and procedures within one year of joining membership; and
6) Demonstrate its long-term viability (e.g. projected income and plan for financial resilience).

**Member Requirements**

ISEAL members commit to learning and improving their practices, guided by ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice and Credibility Principles; and work together to build a stronger voluntary standards movement. ISEAL members commit to demonstrate compliance with the following performance requirements.

All ISEAL Members shall:

1) Be guided by the **ISEAL Alliance Credibility Principles** in their approach to creating and maintaining a credible and robust system, and ensure that none of the activities of the organisation or the activities of subsidiaries or parent companies may be construed as running counter to the ISEAL Credibility Principles;
2) Commit to abide by the ISEAL Code of Ethics, particularly in their interactions with ISEAL and with ISEAL members (see Annex 1); Only make claims about ISEAL associate and full membership in full accordance with the **ISEAL Member Claims Policy**; and
3) Respond to reasonable requests for information from the ISEAL Secretariat.

In addition, all Standard-Setting Members shall:

1) Demonstrate compliance with the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice over time, in accordance with the **ISEAL Code Compliance Requirements for Standard-Setting Members**. This also includes a commitment to report annually regarding Code compliance. Specifically, organisations wishing to apply for associate membership shall (in summary):
   a. Meet the baseline criteria against the Impacts, Standard-Setting and Assurance Codes;
   b. Be in a position to meet all three of the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice within three years of joining membership; and
   c. Have no significant barriers to meeting the improvement criteria within the given timeframe for compliance with each Code.

In addition, all Accreditation Members shall:

1) Demonstrate compliance with the requirements outlined in **ISEAL Compliance Requirements for Accreditation Members**.

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2 [www.iseal.org/credibilityprinciples](http://www.iseal.org/credibilityprinciples)

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Fees

For information about the one-off application fee and annual membership fees, please consult the ISEAL Member Fee Schedule. URL: www.iseal.org/memberfee

To apply

For more information on how to apply for membership, please refer to the relevant ISEAL membership application procedure for standard-setting organisations or accreditation bodies.

You may also direct any queries to membership@isealliance.org
Annex 1: ISEAL Alliance Code of Ethics

ISEAL Alliance Overall Aim

To strengthen sustainability standards systems for the benefit of people and the environment

Vision for Membership

ISEAL members are driving the sustainability standards movement forward and embrace the ISEAL Alliance as an important platform for defining credibility and working together to continuously improve their impacts. All members support the ten ISEAL Credibility Principles, which capture what’s essential for a sustainability standards system to deliver positive impact.

Full and associate members are also brought together by a common desire to collaborate and innovate as they seek to make their social and environmental standards systems more effective and more widely adopted by governments, businesses and other stakeholders. They also engage in strategic discussions and working groups to ensure that standards are constantly evolving and at the frontline as vehicles for sustainable development.

Code of Ethics

ISEAL Members:

a. Commit to work collectively within the ISEAL Alliance to achieve the Alliance’s Strategic Framework;
b. Ensure that none of its activities or the activities of its subsidiaries or parent companies run counter to the ISEAL Credibility Principles;
c. Share information about their programs and procedures with other ISEAL members;
d. Integrate public transparency as a basic operating principle by making information about their operations, including financial information, publicly available through their respective websites;
e. Seek opportunities to collaborate with other members at all levels of implementation of their standards system;
f. Strive to improve access of producers to multiple standards systems by creating efficiencies between systems;
g. Strive to reduce confusion in the market by clearly and accurately communicating the nature of their standards program;
h. Develop agreements on how they will present their program and each other externally, and strive to follow those agreements in communications to external stakeholders;
i. Refrain from making false or misleading statements about other ISEAL members;
j. Strive to mitigate all potential conflicts of interest in their work, as they arise, including undue influence by companies;
k. Actively engage with other ISEAL members to achieve the above mentioned goals;
l. Do not engage in work elsewhere that contradicts this Code of Ethics; and
m. Do not make false statements about the ISEAL Alliance or the nature of their membership in ISEAL.